

HOUSE BILL 103

By Winningham

AN ACT to name a segment of State Route 53 in Clay County in honor of the late Joe A. Clark.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those exemplary public servants who contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than the late Joe A. Clark, who distinguished himself as one of Clay County's finest citizens during his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, a native and lifetime resident of Clay County, Joe A. Clark was born November 15, 1922, in the Willow Grove community of the county; and

WHEREAS, the son of Dr. Edward Clark and Mrs. Melia Clark, he was a pharmacist who worked for many years in the family-owned business; and

WHEREAS, Joe Clark was a person of impeccable morals and irreproachable integrity, and he worked to establish a brighter future for his friends and neighbors in Celina and Clay County as a devoted public servant and proficient civic leader, including meritorious service as the Mayor of Celina (1959-1960); and

WHEREAS, he served his constituents in Clay, Fentress, Overton, Pickett, and Putnam counties with the utmost acumen and alacrity as a member of the House of Representatives during the 81st and 82nd General Assemblies (1959-1962); and

WHEREAS, as a private citizen, Mr. Clark was instrumental in the completion of the Corridor J project, which included improving State Route 53 from Celina northward to the Kentucky line; and

WHEREAS, he selflessly volunteered his time to assist County Executive Cecil Langford in bringing to fruition this safe, efficient, and modern highway for the benefit of his fellow Clay Countians; and

WHEREAS, he was a persistent presence in Nashville, where he talked frequently and persuasively with representatives, senators, and even the governor to impress upon the decision makers of the day the great importance of the Corridor J project to his community; and

WHEREAS, a member of America's Greatest Generation, Mr. Clark proudly served his country during World War II as a fighter pilot; he flew several missions over the German empire and was shot down once behind enemy lines, but through valor and intrepidity, he managed to survive and escape; and

WHEREAS, he was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater of Operations Medal, the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters for his courageous performance in combat; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Clark enjoyed a bountiful and productive life before passing away on Christmas Day, 2004, at the age of eighty-two; and

WHEREAS, the Clay County Commission has petitioned this body to name a certain segment of State Route 53 (the very road that he fought successfully to improve) to honor his illustrious memory and to permanently commemorate Mr. Clark's life of purpose and commitment; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the segment of State Route 53 in Clay County beginning at the northern side of the Obey River Bridge to a point one (1) mile north of the Obey River Bridge is hereby designated the "Joe A. Clark Memorial Highway" as a lasting tribute to an excellent public servant and even more accomplished human being.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the segment of State Route 53 described in Section 1 as the "Joe A. Clark Memorial Highway".

SECTION 3. The erection of such directional signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.